

## Professional Story

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When reflecting on the past 24 months of my nursing career, I am filled with gratitude and pride regarding the contributions I have made to my professional practice and my team. My most notable efforts include creating the Vanderbilt Children's Surgery and Clinics (VCSC) Unit Board, becoming VCSC's Ophthalmology Champion, and embracing the roles of innovator and collaborator to streamline VCSC processes.

In February of 2022, I founded Vanderbilt Children's Surgery and Clinics (VCSC) Unit Board (**TL-11**). Our Unit Board uniquely encompasses 37 care team members including operating room (OR) registered nurses, holding room/post anesthesia care unit (HR/PACU) nurses, clinical staff leaders, certified surgical technicians, nurse practitioners, anesthesia technologists, endoscopy technologists, and child life specialists. Founding the VCSC Unit Board has promoted open discussion, communication, and interprofessional collaboration among our diverse but close-knit team. It also serves as a vessel for colleagues to conduct presentations, share knowledge, and grow in their own professional practice. (**EP-7**) Developing the VCSC Unit Board charter, organizing meeting materials, rounding with staff monthly, and hosting/facilitating meetings has also resulted in tremendous personal growth for myself as a leader.

In January 2023, Ophthalmology brought Vanderbilt pediatric eye surgery to VCSC and the Murfreesboro community for the first time. I identified a knowledge deficient at VCSC regarding ophthalmology's unique needs. I volunteered to cross-train as VCSC's Ophthalmology Champion (**SE-11**) and bring what I learned to cross train VCSC staff. I attended training days at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital (VCH) where I shadowed staff and observed surgical procedures. Using the information I collected during my training, I created doctor preference cards (DPCs) for our surgery center. DPC's act as a staff reference guide when preparing for a surgical case and specify equipment, medication, instrumentation, and positioning considerations. I also shared practical skills with VCSC nurses, such as surgical eye prep and familiarity with ophthalmic medications. I provided this education through verbal instruction and demonstration and validated staff learning through verbalization and return demonstration. I continue to serve as the VCSC Ophthalmology Champion and feel honored to play a part in bringing a new service to our center and to our community. The cross training I completed has certainly helped me feel more comfortable performing ophthalmology cases, and it is my hope that my fellow VCSC nurses feel the same.

With the rapid growth at our surgical center comes opportunities regarding utilization of staff, space, and equipment. Due to an increase in staff, VCSC OR staff felt

the need to develop a policy that would ensure fairness in the allotment of paid time off (PTO) requests during holiday weeks. I led efforts to develop the VCSC OR Holiday Time Off Policy (**SE-4**). First, I developed a Redcap survey to collect more information from staff. Data in hand, I presented the results and held a discussion at Unit Board to formulate a rough draft policy. Lastly, I forwarded the draft to our nurse manager for approval. The VCSC OR Holiday Time Off Policy has been effective since January 2024. I am proud of my team for participating in the conception of a policy that promotes nurse autonomy, work life balance, and job satisfaction at VCSC.

When Ophthalmology came to VCSC in January 2023, the service line came with many new supplies, suture, and medications. I created the eye cart as an innovative solution to storing supplies and suture (**NK-7**). Using the information I collected during my cross training, I worked with central supply to order necessary supplies and suture and develop PARs for the eye cart. The cart was created for staff to feel empowered to have all eye items in one convenient, portable, organized system. I received positive feedback from staff regarding the eye cart, but staff reported the ophthalmology medications were confusing and withdrawing them from the Omnicell was a lengthy process. I worked with pharmacy to develop twelve VCSC specific Omnicell Ophthalmology Eye Medication Kits. This allows staff to select a kit based on provider and procedure, and the Omnicell dispenses all medications required for the case. The implementation of doctor and surgery specific Omnicell kits is a first for the VCSC OR. The kits are an innovation that has streamlined the process of removing medications for eye cases and increase efficiency and accuracy. Lastly, I wanted staff to have quick reference guides when working in Ophthalmology. I first developed the “Eye Cheat Sheet” for staff and later created a guide detailing how to access Eye Medication Kits in the Omnicell. I learned a great deal working on these projects and am happy to use that knowledge to improve the quality of care our ophthalmology patients receive at VCSC.

The Ophthalmology service also brought additional equipment, including specialized eye stretchers. The eye stretcher differs from a traditional operating table due to a unique head support that allows the patient’s head to rest comfortably at an angle so the surgeons can easily access the eye(s) while seated. The eye stretchers posed a unique challenge to our surgery center for a few reasons. First, our other surgeries are performed on a traditional operating table located in the OR. Secondly, our stretchers are managed by the HR/PACU nurse team and care partner and stored in the PACU area. Third, VCSC has only two eye stretchers to accommodate all eye cases (up to 8 cases a day!). I identified the need for collaboration amongst the HR/PACU, OR team, and nurse manager to develop an eye stretcher utilization process (**EP-9**). The discussion I led at Unit Board resulted in collaborative teamwork to find a solution to a problem that impacted team members

serving different care areas at our center. The process has resulted in a seamless utilization of our resources.

In conclusion, I am appreciative to be part of an organization that supports nurse advancement. This support has inspired me to promote collaboration, streamline processes, and support my peers to perform at their best at VCSC. Thank you for your consideration for my RN4 status.